

many medical doctors to optometrists, and medical doctors by virtue of their four-year program of medical education, by virtue of their two-year internship, by virtue of their further specialization through board certification and the like have been trained in the art of treating and healing the entire body. The primary care physician is the better qualified person to provide medication to the eyes to treat eye infection and eye disease because the primary care physician who is scattered throughout the face of Nebraska, who is easily accessible, who is readily available, has the education in pharmacology, the education in disease, the education in injury, and is the person most capable and most trained to apply drugs to the eyes. The optometrist, on the other hand, is a person who has been trained primarily to fit lenses, primarily to prescribe eyeglasses. The optometrist may well be trained to detect eye defects and eye diseases. The optometrist, on the other hand, does not have, never has had, and if he or she is going to have it in the future, it is going to require quite a bit of work, the kind of training necessary to literally sort through the pharmacopeia necessary to treat a disease or infection. Now, I have with me the report that was done by the Pennsylvania House Committee that was reviewing the scope of practice law for optometrists in Pennsylvania, and what you should be mindful of as I read this material is that the State of Pennsylvania, itself, has the Pennsylvania College of Optometry from whom many of our own optometrists are graduates. "The Pennsylvania House Committee, in examining this question with respect to the application of therapeutic drugs to the eyes, concluded that the optometrists simply did not have the training and educational attainment necessary to engage in this portion of medical practice."

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: They said, these are our counterparts in Pennsylvania, "While the use of therapeutic drugs and the related studies such as biology, physiology, pharmacology, and clinical experience are presently receiving more emphasis in optometric education than they have at times in the past, the committee is not convinced that even optometrists who have recently attended an optometric college have received sufficient education to be authorized to use therapeutic drugs solely at their discretion." That is a very recent finding. Now, our eyes are too precious, are too precious to entrust at this point to men and women